

Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee:

Regarding HB4497, HB 4498, HB4499

The question before you today is certainly not an easy one, but if you remove the emotion from this issue and just look at the facts your decision should be based on what the needs of our state are at this time, and is public safety really going to be significantly affected.

Should inmates be rewarded for good behavior? There has been the argument that this would put State employees out of work, welcome to what has been happening to families across this State. For way too long Michigan has been keeping people in prison much longer than necessary because of the actions of a few. It has been said that releasing inmates before they have served their minimum sentence will increase the possibility they will commit a crime again. This is highly doubtful. Where has it been shown that the longer one serves, the less chance there is for someone to break the law again.? Who is to say a longer sentence would reduce the chance that someone could go out and commit a crime when released? Actually quite the opposite is true. The longer a person is incarcerated, the less chance they have of succeeding when they are released.

There is the argument we need to keep all these bad people in prison for a very long time and just cut expenses to save money. There isn't much more to cut in the prison system. There is very little being done to rehabilitate inmates or provide any educational benefits that could help them change their lifestyle now. There are no funds to cut and our prisons are over flowing.

People have said that inmates can behave while they are incarcerated because they can't get in trouble in prison. That just isn't true. I speak from personal experience, my son has been in prison for seven years now, and it is very easy for simple mistakes to get you in trouble. My son received a ticket for sitting on the floor and playing with his four year old son. First time inmates are targets and can be set up to get tickets. It isn't really all that easy to stay out of trouble. Rewarding those inmates who do succeed would actually make a lot of sense. Good time doesn't have to be given equally to second or third time offenders, a tier could be created to factor that in.

These Bills have the potential to actually help create a better prisoner as well as save the State the money we so desperately need elsewhere. Please take careful consideration before voting against these Bills.

Ginger Granger